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ABSTRACT

Noting that writing should be part of the instructional/learning strategies used in every classroom across the curriculum at all grade levels, this guide presents activities for using various kinds of writing in the content areas. The guide presents the activities according to the following writing types: (1) journal writing, (2) letter writing, (3) newspaper writing, (4) personal narrative writing, and (5) poetry writing. Each section of the guide includes suggestions for using a specific kind of writing in art, home economics, industrial arts, mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies. Samples of writing from different areas are included in the guide. (HTH)

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ED260410

WRITING

DON'T LEAVE IT IN THE ENGLISH CLASS

- Ideas for writing activities in art, science, math, home economics, social studies, and physical education.
- Compiled by the South Bay Writing Project-summer 1984. Editors: Debbie Steinacker
  Linda Stockton
  Ron Deetz

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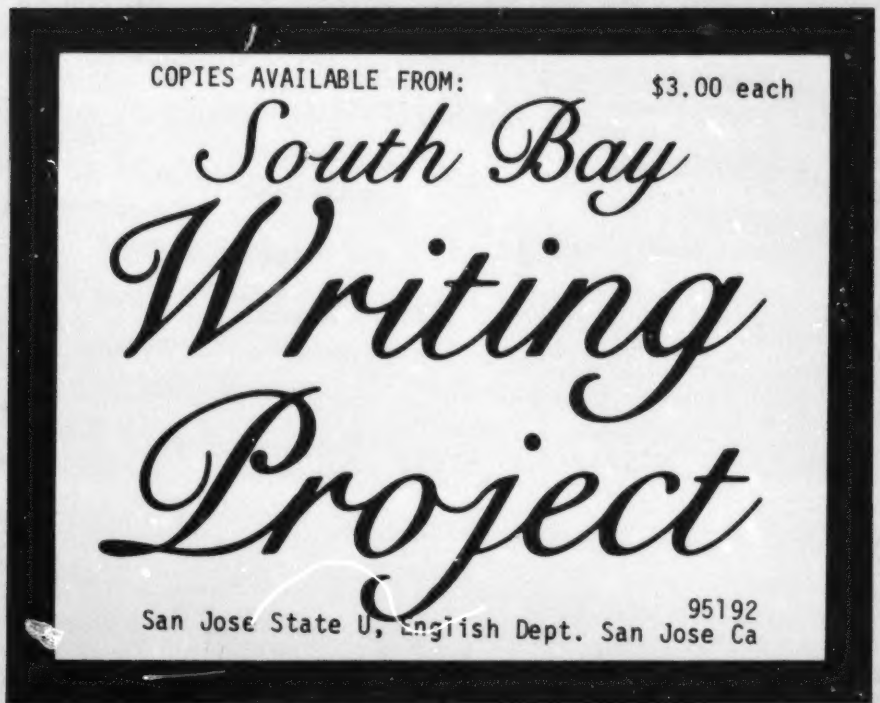
W R I T I N G

Don't Leave It in the

English Classroom

Activities to Enhance
Teaching in All Areas



Writing should be planned as a major part of the instructional/learning strategies used in every classroom across the total curriculum at all grade levels. Engaging in writing activities stimulates student thinking which results in greater learning of concepts and processes basic to science, mathematics, and social studies curricula. Students who keep biology process journals, write persuasive letters to legislators, or explain the method of solving a problem in geometry are engaging actively with content in a way that does not occur in the typical lecture mode of instruction. We need to seek out strategies that involve students in writing for varied purposes, for as they compose their thoughts, they will learn the content we want to teach, and they will learn how to express themselves in writing more effectively.

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Using Journal Writing across the Curriculum

Using Letter Writing across the Curriculum

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Using Personal Narrative Writing across the Curriculum

Using Poetry Writing across the Curriculum

The authors of each section include suggestions for using a specific kind of writing in art, home economics, industrial arts, mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies. They also include sample writing.

Recommended Resources

1984 SOUTH BAY WRITING INSTITUTE

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Jones, Yvonne	San Jose Unified School District
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Stockton, Linda	Oak Grove School District
Sykes, Trudy	Whisman School District
Yandell, Dorothy	Evergreen School District

USING JOURNAL WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Art Awareness Journal
2. Daily Project Accomplishments

Home Economics

1. Record Recipes
2. Record Tastes
3. Record Cooking or Sewing Frustrations
4. Record Reactions to What You Ate That Day

Industrial Arts

1. Record Project Accomplishments

Math

1. Process Journal
2. "Dear Computer"

Physical Education

1. Rainy Day Journal Writing
2. Once Per Week Write on Your Own Physical Fitness, Favorite Sport, Health

Science

1. Record in a Daily Log the Thrust of the Science Lesson - Last Five Minutes
2. Fieldtrip Log

Social Studies

1. Keep a History Book of the Day
2. Keep a History Book of the Period in History Studying

Examples

(Home Economics) The brownies were hard and dry. We left them in too long. Debbie was the timer and she blew it. The recipe was easy to follow, but doubling it was tough. Two times 3/4 was difficult to figure out. It's 1 1/2.

(Science) Today, I learned that dinosaurs were really ancient Reptiles. I got to pick up the classroom pet reptile called "Sheila-Monster". She is a Green Amnevia Lizard. Lizards have three main characteristics: dry, scaly skin, lay eggs on land, and ? . I'll have to ask about the third one tomorrow.

(Social Studies) Over by my house yesterday, a train derailed. It went through the cement wall and hit one house. I saw them fixing up the tracks the day before. I guess it didn't work. Today, Mondale said he picked a woman to be Vice President. (My mother was Happy.)

Compiled by John Heilman, Linda Stockton, and Debbie Steinacker

USING LETTER WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Writing Letters Inquiring About Supplies
2. Writing to an Art Museum

Home Economics

1. Writing Letters to the Editor
2. Writing Letters for Information

Math

1. Writing Letters of Complaint to a Math Process
2. Writing Letters to the Teacher Explaining the Troubles They are Having
3. Writing Letters to the Publisher About Errors in the Math Book

Music

1. Writing Letters for Tickets to a Concert or Musical Production
2. Write Letters to Composers
3. Write Letters to Radio Stations

Physical Education

1. Writing Fan Letters
2. Write to a Sport's Editor
3. Write An Invitation to a Sport's Star to Visit
4. Write for Information Regarding Equipment

Science

1. Write to a Specific Society For Information - Sierra Club, Department of Forestry, Audubon Society

2. Write to a Scientist, Inventor

Social Studies

1. Write to a Famous Person in History
2. Write to a State Capitol for Information
3. Write to a Politician

MEMO

Date: July 3, 1984

To: All Arachnids

From: Joan Friesen

Re: Residence Occupancy

It has come to my attention that my private residence becomes periodically inhabited by various members of your order. While they are individuals from various families, it is not my wish to specifically identify which member of which species it is nor to establish blame.

It would appear that we both have a need for a residence that is private, free from intruders and nourishing to the life of the occupant. There is no question that I admire the beauty of your workmanship and the intricate manner in which you construct the delicate framework of your homes in the corners of my rooms. However, my order demandsof its species, and particularly the female of the species, to maintain a residence perfectly clean, free of "cobwebs" and "creepy crawly things."

It is your transient activities that startle me the most, triggering unexpectantly the murderess' instinct that I am normally able to control. For instance, I have personally witnessed your larger brethren moving across my ceiling while I am reposing in bed. Even more unsettling has been the presence of your more wayward cousins in my towel used for drying after a shower or an article of clothing with which I am about to be attired.

Therefore, I propose the following alternatives to meet our mutual needs and instincts. If you must use my residence to fulfill your needs (and I do realize the pressing problem of housing in the summer), I propose that you confine yourself to the foundational space under my rooms and the attic above my rooms. I will even concede the garage, but you must realize that at times I may intrude into that space, without malicious intent, of course. If you must travel through my rooms, please do so at night bypassing all areas of clothing, material and books, completing your passage by 6:00 a.m., my awakening hour.

Please reply after due consideration of the proposals, consequences and confession that I have set forth. Let us cooperate that we may live together in peace.

3285 Brandy Lane
San Jose, CA 95132
July 9, 1984

Honorable Dan McCorqudale
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA

Dear Senator:

I am writing to express my support for SB786 and to urge you to vote for passage of this bill.

I am particularily interested in the sections of the bill that deal with the improvement of the writing skills of our students. Having taught at the elementary level in California for twenty years, I have observed a gradual decline in the written language skills of our students. SB 786 will be an important step in the right direction if we are to reverse this downward trend. In addition to written language skills, the bill also provides the support necessary for improving other areas of the school curriculum as well.

I fully support the content of SB 786, and I am very pleased to see that the bill includes the funding necessary to carry out its intent. I urge you to support our schools and our children. Please vote "Yes" on SB 786.

Respectfully,

William J. Mulford

William J. Mulford

1111 Weyburn Ln.
San Jose, CA 95129
July 5, 1984

Miss Versateller
10260 De Anza Blvd.
Cupertino, CA 95129

Dear Miss Teller:

I have a better than average memory. However, because of your structure, just walking up to you intimidates me.

First it takes me a second or two to know how to put my card into a slot correctly. When you accept it, I breathe a sigh of thankfulness. Then I have to get a pencil from my purse to punch in my numbers because it hurts to use my knuckles. On many occasions I have had to use my knuckles and they have been sore for days.

Next I have to think carefully what I need to push to make my transaction. One day you definitely told me to push O.K. if I wanted to make another transaction, so I did. You flashed something like, "Thanks for stopping by," and cut me off. It was Friday and you probably were tired, but you sure left me in the air as to what to do next.

All of this is leading up to the "last straw". Yesterday I put in my card and the number just left my mind. Not to waste the trip I made an attempt and you were not too nice in the way you advised me that I was wrong. In your choice of words I could see you thumbing you nose at me.

I refused to let this humble me and sent you another set of numbers. Apparently these were wrong also. At that moment the correct code popped into my mind, but you were already in the process of adding the last straw. On your screen you said something to this effect. Pardon my paraphrasing.

> Take your card and go home. A dumb person like you shouldn't be let out of the house without a keeper. Even if you come up with the correct numbers this time, I'll not complete a transaction for you today.

It has now been one week since you won the first round. Should you treat me in such a deprecating manner when I return, I shall turn to my right, place my torn card in the trash container, and never see your face again.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Jones

303 North Creek Drive
San Jose, California 95139
July 10, 1984

Mr. Xerox Machine #23786
2050 Kammerer Avenue
San Jose, California 95127

Dear Mr. Xerox:

This is a letter of complaint expressing my dissatisfaction with your numerous malfunctions during the course of last year.

Did you realize that you stopped functioning a total of 50 out of the 180 instructional days last school year? Now this may not seem like much to you, but it accounts for 25% of my instructional working days. Actually, you've had so many bad days this year that I've lost track of the number of days that I've had to do without instructional material because you've chosen to take the day off. Have you no compassion for those of us who have to put in a full day of hard work! It's clear to me that any other decent piece of machinery would have shown more respect for its fellow patrons.

Another thing, I'm deeply disappointed in how you've eluded your responsibilities during this past year. I'm no tyrant when it comes to discipline, but believe me if you pull this "sick business" again this coming year I'll have you discarded so fast it'll make your head spin. Do you realize that we had the repair man over so often during the first half of the school year that we started to claim him as part of our regular staff. We even invited him to some of our staff luncheons. The point is Mr. freeloader we all have responsibilities for which we are accountable. Speaking of accountability, remember the day when you left me short 10 test papers just because we ran out of your favorite paper?

Lastly, how dare you take the liberty to change my lesson plans at will! Incase you didn't realize it, your refusal to work during the third week of February resulted in my having to rearrange a schedule which had taken me two months to develop. In addition I had to spend five additional hours of work that week searching for supplemental material. I must say, you've got your nerve! Knowing your family's history, I should have known better than to accept you into our organization. Mr. Xerox, you're fired!

Sincerely yours,

Mary Garcia

Using Newspaper Writing
Across the Curriculum

Art:

1. Write a review of an art show-art displayed in the classroom.
2. Write a biographical sketch of an artist he/she likes.

Home Economics:

1. Plan a food section around a theme.
2. Write an editorial about the importance of nutrition to teenagers.
3. Write recipes for cultural dishes with background into the particular culture.

Industrial Arts:

1. Write an editorial on the importance of safety or following directions.
2. Write an article about a craft fair.

Math:

1. Interview another math teacher.
2. "Interview" Albert Einstein or other famous math figures.

Music:

1. Write an expository article about a concert.
2. Write an editorial about a concert or group.

Physical Education:

1. Write an editorial or expository piece about the importance of warm-up before engaging in physical activities.

Science:

1. Write up a classroom experiment as if it were a break-through for science.
2. Write a biographical sketch about a known or little known scientist.

Social Studies:

1. Paraphrase an article taken from the newspaper. Teacher should provide the article.

Food Section

Keep Them Home on Halloween

Food is the most important element of any party, besides the guests, especially to a teenager. The younger kids also think food is important. For this kind of a party, food that can be carried around is the best kind. Here are some recipes for carry around foods.

Muffin Pizza

Make Your Own Nachos:

Students can paraphrase an article from the newspaper. This article was taken from The San Jose Mercury News, Wednesday, May 30, 1984.

IS A MOVE TO THE MOON IN THE FUTURE?

NEW YORK (AP) - Eight million years from now people will move from earth because it will be too crowded. Eric M. Jones, an astrophysicist, made this prediction at the annual meeting of the American Association fro the Advancement of Science. First, they will move to the moon. Next they will set up house on the asteroids and planets and comets.

SHORT EXPOSITORY MATH

HAWAII

Come and visit the island of your dreams. Money saving packages are available now through "Follow Your Dreams" travel agency. We have ten day packages that begin at only $489., and include round trip air fair with meal and beverage service, your choice of 8 deluxe beach hotels, round trip transfers, flower lei greetings and a beautiful color memory album. Book your dream holiday today. Don't wait, PAY NOW, and save 20%.

P.E.

Importance of warm-up exercise.

You're wearing the clothes you plan to run in and you're ready to start. Hold-on! Your mind may be ready, but your body isn't. It has probably done nothing all day. Before you start running (or any other strenuous exercise) you must prepare for it. That's where warm-up exercises come in.

A warm-up stimulates the circulation and raises body temperature, helping muscle contraction. Take about ten minutes to do warm-up exercises. Include sit-ups, stretch hamstring and calf muscles. Stretching is very important. Stretch slowly so muscles will lengthen.

Don't be stupid and just do your "thing." You'll pay for it later.

Compiled by: Naomi Alpert, Lois Frick, Yvonne Jones and Dorothy Yandell.

USING PERSONAL NARRATIVE WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.

Art
1. Write your personal reaction to an art work
2. Be an art work. e.g. Mona Lisa

Home Economics
1. Tell thestory of a cotton seed, or other plant.
2. Keep a chart of your eating habits. Write a summary of what you learned.

Industrial Arts
1.

Math
1. Imagine you are a number or function and describe yourself.
2. Imagine you are the triangle that Pythagoras used when he developed his theorem

Physical Education
1. Write your feelings about a particular game or contest you participated in.
2. Imagine you are some of the sports equipment, e.g. a baseball glove.

Science
1. Imagineyourself as a plant or animal or rock. Tell the history of yourself.
2. Write a scientific observation of an object or phenomena. Write your personal reaction to this observation and to the object.

Social Studies
1. Tell the story of a historical event.
2. Describe a historical event as if you were present; e.g., Imagine you are a slave on a Southern plantation, a Greek slave of Plato, an Egyptian slave, a debtor in debtors' prison

Music
1. Describe your reaction to a concert you attended.
2. Describe an experience you had at a concert.

Examples

(Science) My name is Bert Basalt. I had rather an unusual birth, exploding onto the world scene, you might say. There I was in that dark hot place deep in Mother Earth, moving up from her center across the layers trying to find spaces to slip through. Forever, it seemed that I kept moving up, seeking an opening. You would not have recognized me then. I didn't even have a shape. I was just like the spaghetti sauce your Mom cooks all day long, thick, red, boiling to reach the top.

Then,freedom at last! I was pushed high in the air in a red hot spray only to speed down the slopes until I finally found a resting place. I've changed and I like it. I'm very dark-colored, cold, full o f holes and so very lightweight. In fact, I'm so easy to carry that a teacher brought me to his class. I now am the center of attention in the Rocks and Minerals exhibit.

I've come a long way!

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An example of the " personal narrative " as might be used in P.E./Health class.

"Confessions of a Paid Assassin"

I am a paid assassin. I am employed by people to shorten the lifespans of many, many people.

My techniques are time proven, many years have been spent in the perfecting of my skills. I work silently, taking my time, lulling my potential victims into a false sense of security. Many of them even profess to having a great fondness for me, saying they "can't live without me" --- when it should be just the opposite.

From time to time people have attempted to prevent me from carrying out my assignment by imposing certain restrictions on me or trying to "filter" out the killer instinct within my soul. None of these methods have proven effective, I still manage to achieve my goal. Why, even the Government has come to my aid, thus enabling me to continue my record as the most ruthless of assassins.

As unbelievable as it may sound, the people who hire me to dispose of someone have themselves as the intended victim. But, afterall, who can blame them. I, Nick O. Tine, have been doing my job very successfully for quite a number of years, and everyone admires the best.

(Social Studies)

March 4, 1777

My dear Annabelle,

I miss you and the kids. I'll try to get home for planting time. Jethro can help get it started.

When I came here with the Massachusetts militia, I never thought we'd be here so long. I know we can't just set down and let the British close down Boston. But I thought they'd leave when they saw we'd determined to fight. I don't see Sam Adams or John Hancock in this God forsakin' place doing any of the fighting. Guess they do all theirs with words.

This is a terrible place to be. It's called Morristown. There lots of hills, and there's a river--good-sized one-- just down the road. I'm just glad to be alive here. General Washington's still in charge. He seems to be a good man. He's in a house up the road. He and some of the other guards built ourselves a hut. There's lots of trees around. So we at least get out of this terrible cold. After living by the Atlantic Ocean, I'm not used to this New Jersey cold.

One of my friends, Jeff Dawes, got sick with chicken pox. He died after just a few days. The rest of us got inoculated. That's something new that this General Washington had heard about. Guess some guy in England found a way to help people not get so sick. Isn't that something! Some British guy helps us Americans keep from dying. The general made all of us get inoculated. That means we get a little of the chicken pox. Now we won't get a real bad case of it. Hope it works 'cause we've seen a lots of folks die from it. So far, it works real good.

We haven't seen the British since just after the new year started. Not that I'm complaining. I wrote you about how we marched and fought and marched and fought. But I guess it all was worth it. We're still here and getting stronger. I figure when the roads start to dry, we'll go find the British, give 'em a good licking and send 'em back to old England. So it won't be long 'til I'm back with you.

Your husband,
John

Participants

Joan Friesen
Bill Mulford
Joan Darroch

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Using Poetry Writing Across the Curriculum

Art
1. shape poems
2. color sense poems

Home Economics
1. poem to remember measurements

Industrial Arts
1. cinquain about a project
2. limerick about something that happened in industrial arts

Mathematics
1. ode to a number
2. cinquain to a function
3. puzzle poems
4. riddles

Physical Education
1. clerihew to a favorite athelete
2. limerick to honor sporting event

Science
1. limerick about a formula
2. formula in the form of a poem

Social Studies
1. haiku to learn about culture
2. limerick to remember dates or events
3. clerihew about historical figure

Examples

Art

Blue is a cool breeze on a
hot summer day.
Blue is a blueberry,
plump and ripe.
Blue is my TR-7,
swift and sleek.
Blue is a mood,
sad and lonely.

Science (limerick)

There once was the discipline of geology
Whose stratas I thought'd be the death of me.
Igneous, metamorphic,
Sedimentary, horrific.
Made me look like I've had a lobotomy.

Mathematics

Hey!teacher, this problem's not solving.
Are we suppose to be wholing or halving?
Drop the zero, carry the three,
Remainder's seven? I can't see.
Why don't we just go back to adding?

Physical Education, History, English

A clerihew is a humorous four line jingle about a person. Edmund Clerihew Bentley 1875-1956), a British detective-fiction writer devised the form. The first and second lines rhyme and the third and fourth lines rhyme.

Sir Christopher Wren
Said I'm going to dine with some men
If anybody calls
Says I'm designing St.Paul's

Mr. Richard Nixon
born west of the Mason Dixon
served his country as boss
but it was a dead loss.

compiled by Ron Deetz
Fran Nelson
Trudy Sykes

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

California State Department of Education. Handbook for Planning an Effective Writing Program. Sacramento, California, 1983, 2nd edition.

Moffett, James. Active Voice; A Writing Program across the Curriculum. Boynton/Cook, 1981.

Moffett, James and Betty Jane Wagner. Student-centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13. Houghton Mifflin, 1983.

Tiedt, Iris M. The Language Arts Handbook. Prentice-Hall, 1983.

Tiedt, Iris M. Exploring Books with Children. Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

Tiedt, Iris M. et al. Teaching Writing in K-8 Classrooms. Prentice-Hall, 1983.

Tiedt, Pamela and Iris Tiedt. Multicultural Teaching. Allyn & Bacon, 1979.

Strunk, Williams and E. B. White. The Elements of Style. Macmillan, 1979, 3rd edition.

All of the above books are available from: The South Bay Writing Project, SJSU English Dept., San Jose CA 95192. Phone: 408/264-3819.